



BLANTYRE CHURCH NYASALAND

PRICE ONE SHILLING

BLANTYRE CHURCH
NYASALAND

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REVEREND
DAVID CLEMENT RUFFELLE SCOTT

M.A., D.D.

MISSIONARY OF THE CHURCH OF
SCOTLAND AT BLANTYRE, 1881-1898

ARCHITECT AND BUILDER OF
THE CHURCH, 1888-1891

DIED AT KIKUYU, BRITISH EAST AFRICA
13TH OCTOBER 1907

“Ye also as Living Stones are built up
A Spiritual House.”

Memorial Tablet in Blantyre Church.

The Building of the
BLANTYRE CHURCH
NYASALAND

1888-1891

Being the Story of a Great Achievement

BY THE REV.

ALEXANDER HETHERWICK

C.B.E., D.D., F.R.G.S.

WITH 24 PHOTOGRAPHS BY

ALEXANDER BURNETT

MISSIONARY AT BLANTYRE

1926

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND OFFICES

22 QUEEN STREET, EDINBURGH

The Building of the
MARTYRE CHURCH
IN
1588-1591

EDINBURGH
1888

Printed in Scotland
by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh

PREFACE

LEST the story of this great achievement should be forgotten as the years go on, and as no Memoir of the architect, David Clement Scott, has been written, I have deemed the Jubilee Year of the Founding of the Mission a fitting time to put on record the story of the building of the Blantyre Church. Those who see it and admire it now forget how long ago it was built and know nothing of the difficulties that had to be overcome by any architect or builder in those early days of the building craft in Central Africa. When one remembers that all the building materials had to be procured and prepared on the spot, and that the native builders had to be trained to do the work expected of them, some idea may be formed of the care and anxiety that the architect had to undergo as he saw the building gradually rising and reaching the conception of it forming in his mind. That this may not be forgotten is one of the aims sought in putting out this little book.

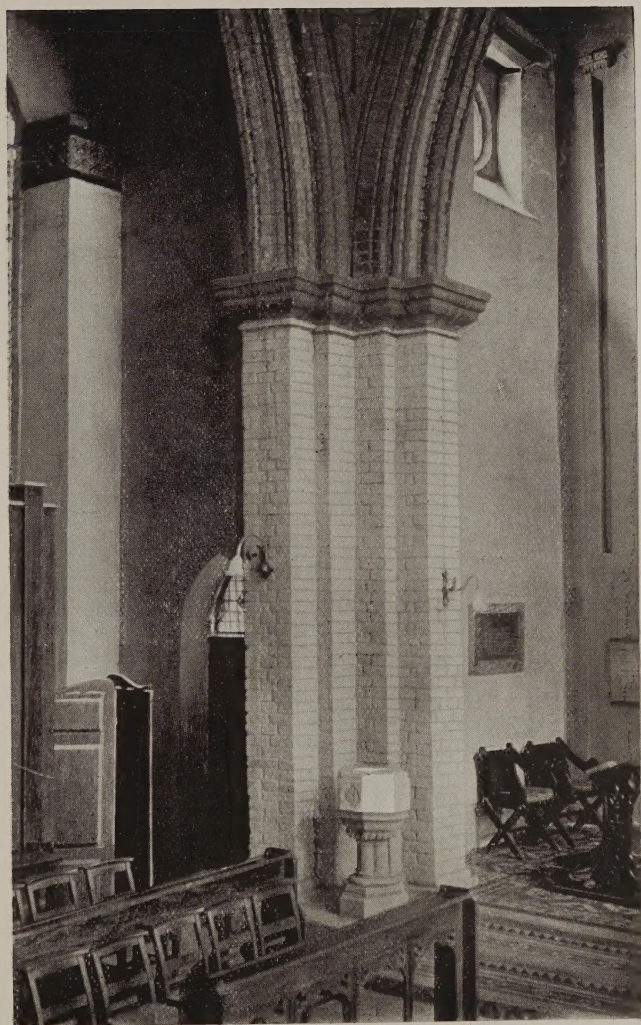
The value of the story is greatly enhanced by

6 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

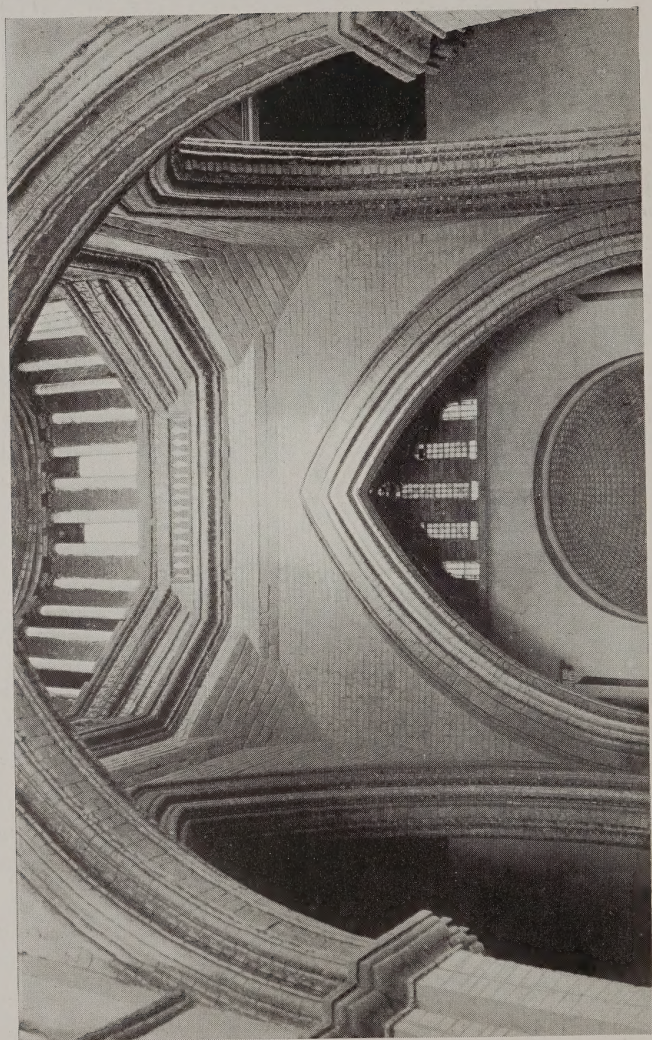
Mr Burnett's photographs which reveal features in the building that few visitors have recognised. The photo which appears on the outside of the cover is by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles C. Bowring, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., etc.

A. H.

BLANTYRE
NYASALAND



2. PILLAR SUPPORTING TRANSEPT AND CHANCEL ARCHES.



3. THE FOUR MAIN ARCHES SUPPORTING THE DOME.

INTRODUCTION

IN the dry season of 1888 the foundations of the Church were dug, and building commenced immediately after. The service of dedication took place on May 10th, 1891. During all these months, in the local "Supplement" to *Life and Work* there is hardly any allusion to the stupendous undertaking on which the Editor was then engaged. In the January number of 1889 a brief paragraph refers to the marriage of Miss Walker, a member of the staff, to Mr James Lindsay, afterwards a planter at Limbe, which took place within the chancel, temporarily roofed-in for the occasion—the first religious ceremony within the newly built walls.

In May of the same year Miss Beck refers to a new game which her little girls had suddenly taken up—church-building by means of some boxes of toy bricks which a friend had sent her. There is no further mention of Church or church-building till March of 1891, when the Editor alludes to the approaching opening ceremony and invites all the Europeans in the district "to be present at the consecration, and to bring with them as many of the headmen and chiefs on or around estates as they can"—and the African touch comes in—"For the natives present by such invitation a feast will be provided."

8 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

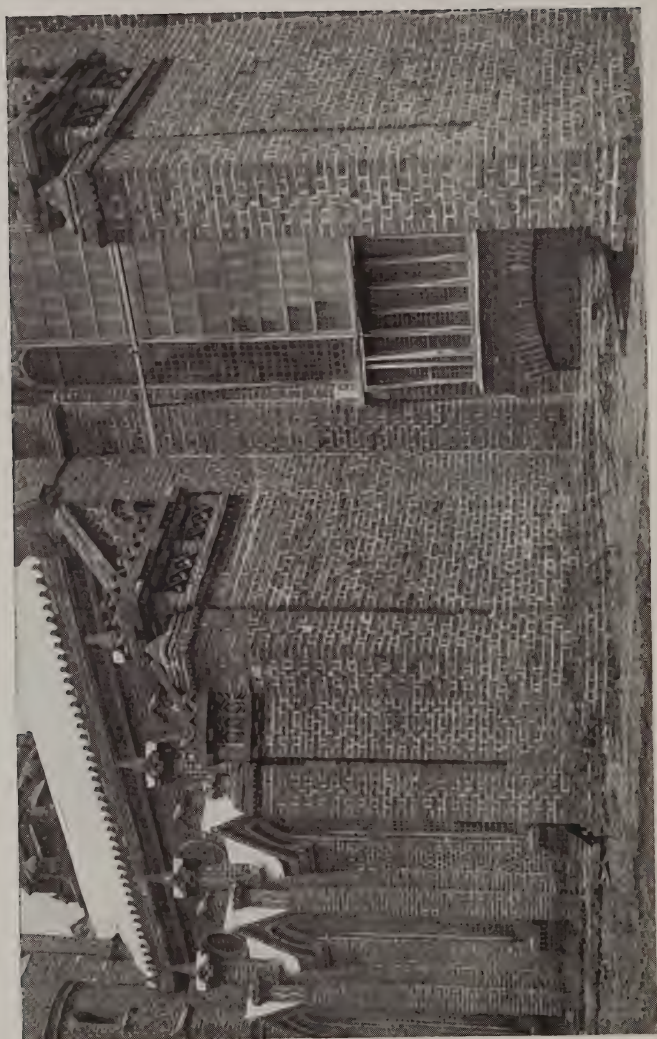
Not till June, the month after the dedication service, is there any allusion to the Church in the pages of the Magazine. But in that month's issue the Editor seems to let his pen move freely, as if a burden had rolled off his shoulders, and gives a full and detailed description of the building and its many parts. But of the labour and pains and anxieties that the work carried with it from the day on which the first sod was dug for the foundation, till the day that he and his fellow-missionaries opened the doors and held their service of dedication, there is no record anywhere. Not even a plan or sketch to show what was in his mind. Only those who were with him and worked by his side during these two and a half years know anything of the problems to be solved, and the difficulties to be overcome before the building stood forth with completeness and glory—a house of God “exceeding magnifical of fame and of glory through all countries.”

In the following pages I will endeavour to fill in the blank of these years, and give a brief account of the erection of a building whose intricate beauties are known to few—and to the ordinary visitor known not at all.

To myself it has been a privilege to minister within its walls to two congregations—Native and European—for more than thirty years, with the exception of brief intervals of furlough. It is now a further privilege to try, together with the help of Mr Burnett's camera, to tell the story of the building and point out some of its architectural features.



4. THE VESTRY (NORTH SIDE).



5. BUTTRESSES (SOUTH SIDE).

Without Mr Burnett's enthusiastic aid mere description would have been futile. Together we may be able to increase an interest, which already many have felt in a building endeared by sacred association to both of us.

I. PREPARATION

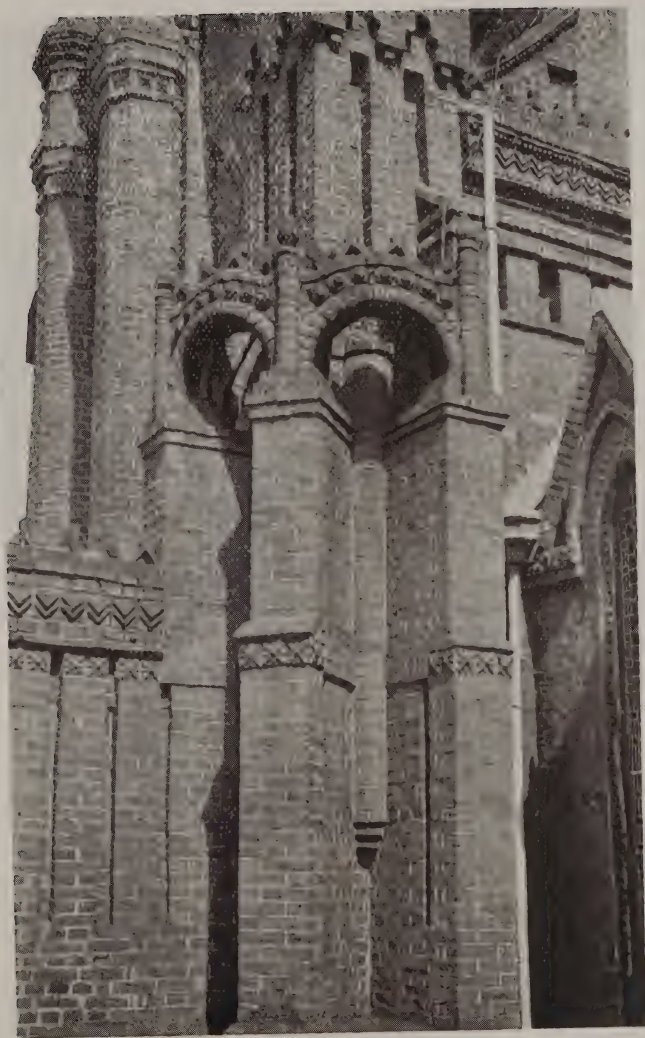
Every brick in the building was made on the spot—made out of the clay dug from the ant-hills which those industrious insects had thrown up over their underground homes in bygone years. All of them lay within a few hundred yards of the Mission, on the slope running down to the Nasolo stream which supplied water to the moulders. The clay was dug by native hands with native hoes, tramped into a soft mass by native feet, carried to the moulders' benches and thrown into the empty moulds by strong native arms, then laid down by the moulder on a small thin board which again was carried on native shoulders and by native hands, and carefully deposited on the drying-floor. A thin layer of grass was spread over the wet clay to keep off the too hot rays of the sun till the slowly hardening brick was firm enough to be handled and set up on end to complete the drying process. Then skilled native hands built the now thoroughly-hardened brick into a kiln, and native hands threw the huge logs of firewood into the open blazing flue, where the blaze soon forced its way into the heart of the piled-up bricks above. For a week the fire was plied till every brick was burned red, and rang to the touch

10 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

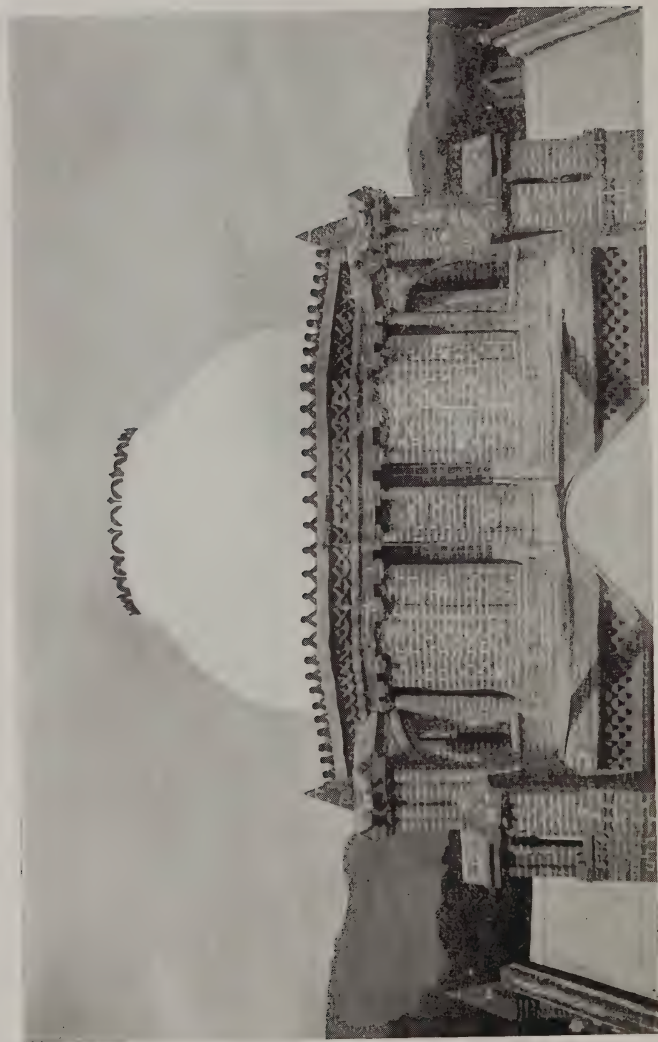
with the metallic note which to the practised ear declared the brick to be well and truly made.

Each of the ordinary bricks was moulded to the standard 12 by 6 by 3 inches—a larger size than is now commonly used in this country. Not every kiln was successful. Sometimes they were fired too little—sometimes too much; especially in the rainy season, the bricks, before being built into the kiln were not thoroughly dry, the result being the loss of all the top layers due to the steam from the lower courses rising up and turning those above them back into their original clay. But, considering all the difficulties that had to be overcome, new workmen, wet seasons which meant damp firewood and oftentimes want of workers at some critical period in the process of making or burning, the losses were remarkably few.

As the building rose and bricks of various forms were called for to fit the architect's ideas, other and more intricate moulds had to be prepared and used. "To lighten the plain bricks," says Scott in the number of *Life and Work* already alluded to, "wooden moulds were made—ogee, flower, circle, bevelled and other string course, pillar and arch mouldings. It was pure invention, and an unprecedented experiment as far as ever experience went, and it succeeded very well." Many of these wooden moulds were shaped and cut by the architect's own hand. Later on he had the assistance of his brother, Dr W. Affleck Scott, whose artist hand is to be seen in the finer moulds such as the "oak-leaf" and the "pine-apple," which are features of the building in its



6. TRIPLE CROWN BUTTRESS.



7. THE DOME, FROM THE WESTERN TOWERS,

later stages. As many as eighty-one different forms of bricks were used in the building, and each was made in its own specially constructed and carved mould. The various photographs give a better idea of the variety of design exhibited in this part of the work than any terms of verbal description.

No record was kept of the total number of bricks used in the Church. They must altogether have numbered many hundreds of thousands. The late Mr Jonathan Duncan, at that time a member of the Mission staff and superintending operations in the brick field, as he left for home on his furlough becoming due, stated his belief that he had made enough bricks for the whole building. All he made were sunk in the foundation—not one of them is visible to-day.

Mr John McIlwain succeeded Mr Duncan in charge of the brick-making and the task of keeping up the supply of the various shapes and forms was no light one. The care taken by the brick-makers is evident to-day in the structure, as it now stands, which after thirty odd years of tropical rain and sun shows few traces of weathering. Here and there a brick has crumbled away with the rain and has had to be replaced. That is all. Still there is apparent in the diversified colouring of some portions of the brickwork marks of the difficulties amid which the work was carried on and the material produced.

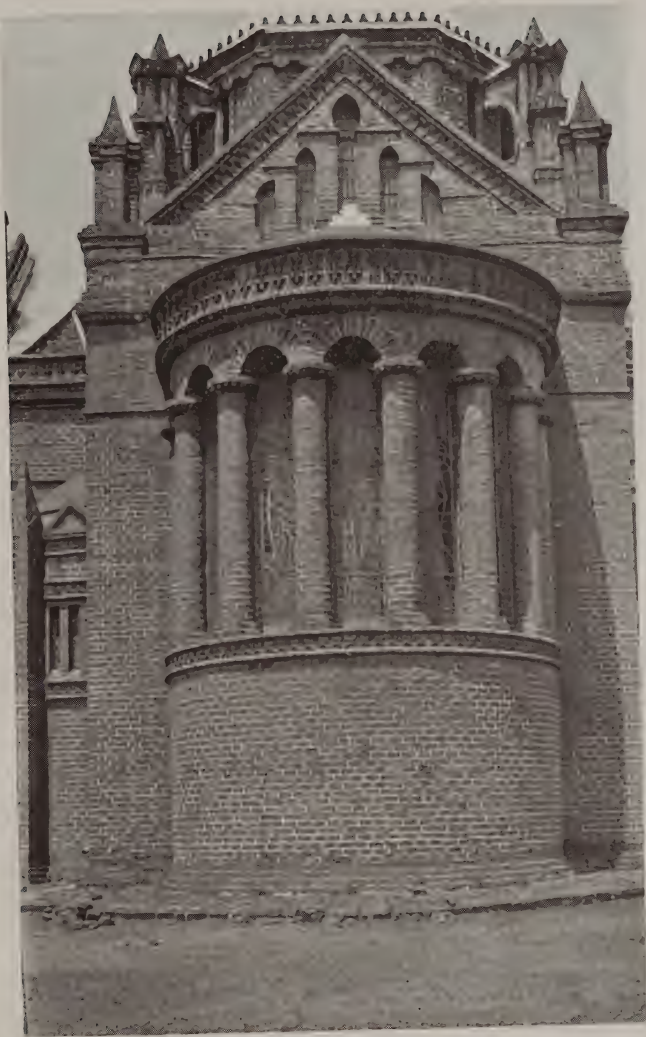
II. THE BUILDING

The foundations were dug in the dry season of 1888. The site had been chosen long before—though there could be only one site in the Mission—the heart of it, facing the road that runs down the old Mission “square.” Building was commenced immediately the foundations were cleared. There was no ceremony of laying the foundation stone, but one Saturday afternoon, when the first bricks in the chancel were laid, the members of the staff gathered within the foundations, and each laid a brick. No one, not even the architect himself, knew what plan of structure was to be raised on these bricks. There was no detailed plan previously prepared. The building grew in the architect’s mind, and the outward structure followed the inward vision.

The general idea as first conceived in his mind and which he showed me in a sketch he had made in the beginning of 1888 was that of two cubes forming the nave, a third cube making the central space under the dome, while the transepts and chancel each occupied half a cube. He himself thus describes his leading ideas in the design :

“The ground plan has been the guide of the whole superstructure ; it was very carefully proportioned to begin with. The form was a Latin cross with very short transepts (10 feet outside measurement), a short choir (12 feet outside measurement), and a semi-circular apse of 8 feet radius. The aim was to make a comely Presbyterian place of worship.

“Regarding the elevation, it was felt that brick



8. THE APSE, WITH ITS HALF-DOME ROOF.



9. SIDE PORCH, WITH QUARTER-DOME ROOF BETWEEN CHANCEL
AND SOUTH TRANSEPT.

offered few facilities in the way of ornamentation beyond the perpendicular line and the right-angled corner. It was resolved therefore to lighten the brickwork and lessen the material by perpendicular lines, as long and as many as could conveniently be obtained. The first idea then in the elevation is the perpendicular rushing up of lines of buttresses and corners. The proportions were ruled by geometrical progression, the first member being large in proportion to the rest. In fact the two last members of the proportion form simply a head to the first perpendicular rise. The cubic spaces, however, perhaps formed the chief element of theoretical difficulty. An harmonious plan and proportioned elevation of themselves give true cubic dimensions ; but the square was taken for the general form of the end section and about two cubes for the nave with the aisles. The aisles are merely passages behind the pillars, of three feet width, but they serve to throw out the pillars and give passage on both sides of the nave which is only twenty feet in width. The whole length of the Church is about 106 feet ; the breadth from aisle wall to aisle wall about thirty ; and the height to the crest of the roof (right-angle elevation) about thirty-seven feet. There is no dull back to the Church, the whole being so managed as to present frontage on every side."

Of the detail of all this no complete plan was drawn. Each detail was "effected" on the spot in brick without clay or mortar before the bricks were actually laid. It was well perhaps that there was no plan laid down on paper, for had such been drawn in

14 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

all its complicated forms even the architect himself would have stood aghast at the task before him. Without doubt he would have been checked from headquarters. He kept his counsel and worked on—keeping himself within the amount allowed. “Why were we not consulted and the plans of all this submitted to us?” said one in authority. Another still higher in authority made reply, “If we had been consulted it would never have been built. Now we’re proud of it.” And well might they be, for pictures of the wonderful “Blantyre Cathedral” appeared in many of the illustrated papers, and the “kudos” of it fell to the Church.

That was after the Church was finished, and men who knew what they were talking about realised the immensity of the task he had accomplished—single-handed. Few save his own immediate circle of friends sympathised with him in his undertaking. Many criticised and prophesied disaster. In fact one such, up country, wrote condoling with him on the “fall of the Church.”

During the early months of the actual building Scott had the aid of Mr David Buchanan, of the firm of Buchanan Brothers, himself a trained stone-mason. “Mr Buchanan built until November 1889,” says Scott, “and then left to superintend his own work, which he felt was suffering by his absence.” Scott himself then took the responsibility of building, and continued from November 1889 to May 1891. Mr Buchanan’s aid was invaluable in giving their first lesson in bricklaying to the native builders, none of whom had ever handled trowel or level



10. THE BELL AND SOUTH-WESTERN TOWERS.



11. THE NORTH-WESTERN TOWER.

before. Building to the string was a hard task, many courses in the building bearing evidence of early workmanship. The spring of the arch over the west door shows careful instruction in chiselling, the keystone—the only stone in the building—being the work of Mr Buchanan's own hand.

Gradually, however, the builders—as well as the architect himself—gained confidence.

The construction of the arches of nave transepts and arches was the first really difficult task he had to face. The photo of these arches with their elaborate mouldings, all worked out in specially formed bricks, reveals the character of the problem he had to solve (Plates 2 and 3). Himself an utterly inexperienced builder with no architectural training, he had to work out his problems of thrust, bond, etc., solely by the principles learned in Tait's classroom in Edinburgh University—these coupled with a large measure of common sense. He was afraid of strains and thrusts, and made allowance for the weight of the superstructure far beyond what the laws of ordinary construction would have called for. But he was working with untried materials, and inexperienced workmen, and in making these allowances he was wise. No evidence of crack or setting has ever been discovered during those later years.

Only once did he dread that his substructure was insufficient for the mass he was piling on the top of it. For the octagonal drum underneath the dome, he planned a triple course of bricks moulded so as together to represent a crown of thorns. The bricks

16 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

for these courses were specially heavy, and when the topmost of these was laid he noticed a crack in one of the arches—the main arch of the nave. This was no doubt due to the ordinary process of “settling,” but it was enough to give him uneasiness, and he resolved at once to strengthen his main and chancel arches, by buttressing them on the north and south of the transept side walls. The buttress on the north side took the form of the porch seen on the photo (Plate 4), which has now been roofed in to form the Minister’s vestry, while on the south side the buttresses formed simple continuations of the side walls of the south transept (Plate 5). Still further, however, to strengthen the main arch of the nave, he added in the angle between the buttresses already mentioned and the main wall of the aisle a triple buttress ending in the triple crown—a little gem which few take note of (Plate 6). On the south side a single buttress bisecting the corresponding angle gave what he considered to be the added security. Further, to make a security doubly sure, he reduced the weight on all his main arches by removing the two upper courses of his “crown of thorns”—which thus lost its form and its meaning—leaving the lowermost course, which is plainly seen in the photo of the dome (Plate 7).

In the account of the building which he himself wrote, from which the previous quotations have been taken, he remarks regarding the difficulties he met with, “the octagonal tower upon the top of the square of four arches, gathering into a perfect circle, and finishing in a dome formed the most

difficult part of the work." Without doubt the gathering of the square tower into the octagon of the drum under the dome gave him great trouble, and here he first laid the bricks in their places "dry," that the result might be seen before the mortar was added. While puzzling out this problem, he one evening took a few ladies of the Mission up the ladders, and through the scaffolding to the spot where the building was in progress. Not satisfied with the result of some of his "dry" attempts, he removed the bricks from the wall and piled them upon the neighbouring scaffold. But scaffolding formed of bare poles, bound together with bark rope, or pinned with wooden pins can stand only a limited strain. Crash! went the whole pile of bricks, through scaffolding, ladders and all, right down to the ground. Fortunately, it being after hours, no workmen were about, and the visitors had been stationed at some little distance to watch the result of the "effecting" process, and so no one was hurt. This was the only mishap of the kind, and the architect, after it was all over could write, after describing the kind of scaffolding he had to use: "various were the devices for the higher levels, and we are thankful to say that not one single scaffolding accident occurred" to darken the pleasure of the work.

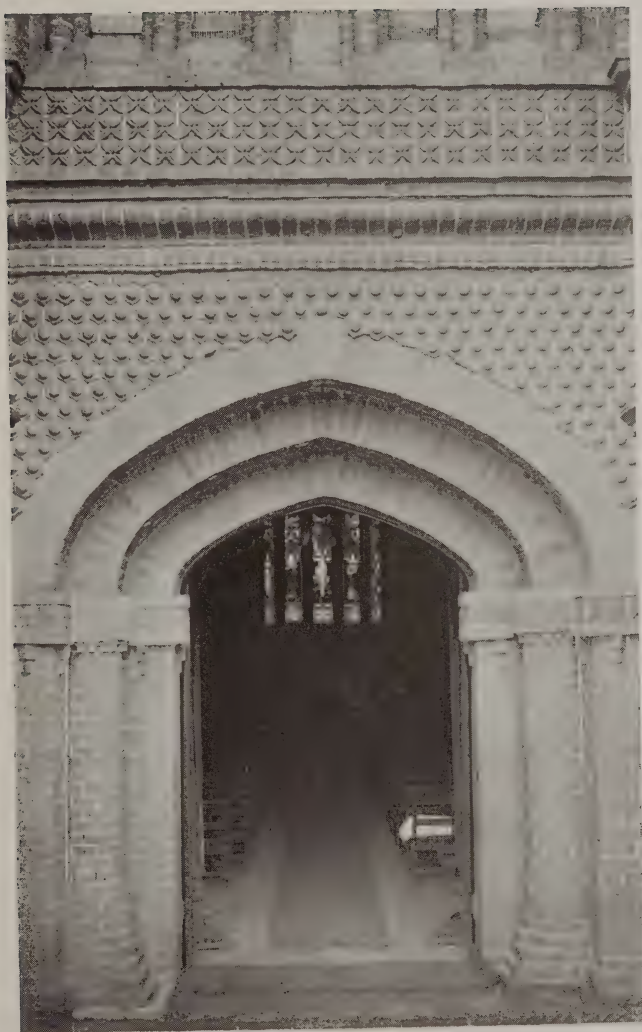
The dome rising off and out of the octagonal drum over the central arch was in itself a problem of no ordinary difficulty. It was built without centering, by means of a long central pole reaching up from the floor to which a string was attached to act as a "trainer" guide for the various courses.

18 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

Each of these circular courses was laid with bricks shaped to fit into its proper place in the structure. This was done by means of a bead and groove moulded on the brick, each tenoned into its neighbour on either side. Thus each course formed, as it were, a solid ring of brickwork. These varying shaped bricks were each made in a mould so formed that by gradually narrowing its two ends, bricks were produced to fit each of the courses as they narrowed towards the central "eye." The "eye" was closed in with a wooden framework now covered over with lead, and from the centre rises the cross that crowns the whole structure. Round the "eye" runs a crown of brick which forms a worthy finish to this wonderful piece of work. Underneath the dome and topping the octagonal drum runs the lowermost of the three courses originally intended to represent a "crown of thorns," which, as already mentioned, had to be reduced to a single course with a view to lessening the weight laid upon the central arches. As was apparent afterwards, these might have been left with greatly added beauty to the whole building (Plate 7).

The narrow windows in each of the sides of the octagon give ample light to the interior of the superstructure over the central arches.

A noteworthy piece of architectural structure is a series of four flying buttresses that spring off the angles of the main walls at the base of the main arches, and abut themselves into the four corresponding sides of the octagonal drum. The bonding of



12. THE WEST DOOR.



13. THE INTERIOR.

these buttresses with the courses of the drum displays an architectural skill marvellous in one who, before he came to Blantyre, had never handled a brick or seen one laid (Plates 7 and 8).

The two western towers in their upper courses, as will be seen from the photos (Plates 10 and 11), are entirely different in design the one from the other. To a certain extent this was caused by a scarcity of bricks of the required pattern, but it may also be ascribed to a theory that Scott gave frequent expression to, that "symmetry means poverty of ideas." Certainly he himself suffered from no such poverty. On some subjects his ideas as a rule were transcendental and often impossible to understand. But, put a pencil into his hand, and a wealth of design in almost any phase of art would flow from it in marvellous profusion. As a designer in commercial life he would have taken a foremost place. Talking one day with the writer on the subject of a Campanile to hold a clock and peal of bells, which he proposed to build as an appendage to the Church, he took his pencil and a sheet of foolscap, and in a few minutes had it covered with a series of outline ideas each of which would have made a fitting adjunct to the building with which it was to harmonise.

Another noteworthy feature is the Moorish-domed bell tower, built into the angle between the south-western tower and the wall of the south aisle (Plate 10): inside this round tower runs a circular staircase, entered by a Moorish-arched doorway in the south-west angle of the nave. This stair in its course upward gives off two doorways—one entering

20 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

a small tower-room on the first floor. From this a door opens on the "nun's walk" along the foot of the five western lancet windows, which leads to the corresponding first floor room of the other western tower. Farther up the bell-tower staircase another door leads into the top tower-room, from which again access is obtained on to the open roof of the Church, and thence to the top room of the other tower.

The last section of the staircase leads into the dome itself, where the bell rope hangs. As will be seen on the photo (Plate 10), the bell is swung in a belfry built on the top of the dome, and on bearings let into long beams built longitudinally into the wall of the tower. Thus any vibration caused by the swinging of the bell is borne by the tower itself—in fact by both circular and western tower. So the bell attachments are as strong to-day as they were the day they were erected.

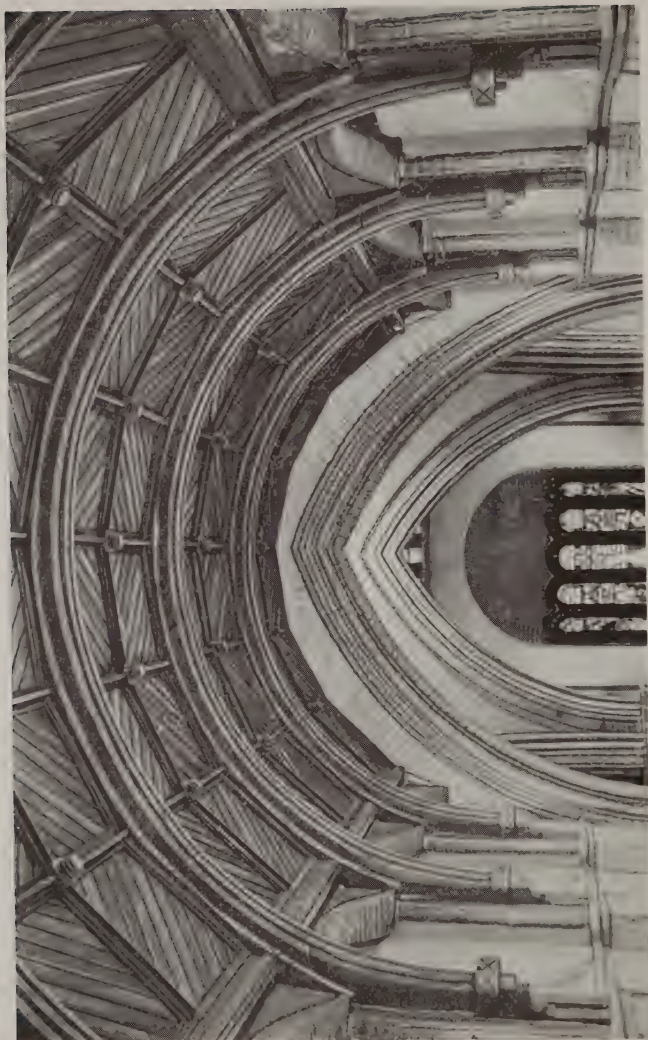
Two points of interest remain to be noted in this description of the building as seen from the exterior. The four-centred Tudor arch over the front west door (Plate 12) is a beautiful piece of chiselled brickwork, wrought under the skilled eye of David Buchanan himself.

Equal care was given to the apse (Plate 8), with its semi-circular dome. This Scott himself considered to be the most difficult part of the whole structure. The result as we see it to-day was not the first nor the second attempt that was made before the architect was satisfied with his work.

The five lancet windows in the gable of the



14. THE NAVE, LOOKING FROM THE CHANCEL.



15. THE PANELLED ROOF WITH PANELLED MAHOGANY CEILING.

chancel and over the small dome are worthy of being filled with something better than they are at present. Angelic figures in adoration would harmonise with the Calvary in the apse windows below.

III. THE INTERIOR

Of the interior, Scott himself wrote in the article already so frequently quoted :

“ The general plan of the interior elevation is a Byzantine arcade of six arches, the seventh being its transept arch, the semi-circular apse and apse arch and the semi-dome at the end forming a round head, and eighth member to the Byzantine Vista (Plates 13 and 14). The four main constructive arches which support the dome are pointed and equilateral. The span of the two transept arches and the chancel arch is 16 feet ; and as the pillars are also 16 feet the chancel arch is the most perfect possible in its proportions. It being impossible to limit the breadth of the nave which is 19 feet, the nave arch was made broad and depressed to the same height as its neighbours, and perfect symmetry was gradually secured for the central tower, octagon, and dome above. The clerestory windows are round, about thirty inches in diameter, and brackets between them give origin to the large semi-circle of the barrel roof. These are of wood and are the solid work of the carpenter and his staff ” (Plate 15).

At one time it was Scott's intention to put a groined barrel roof over his nave, and it was with a

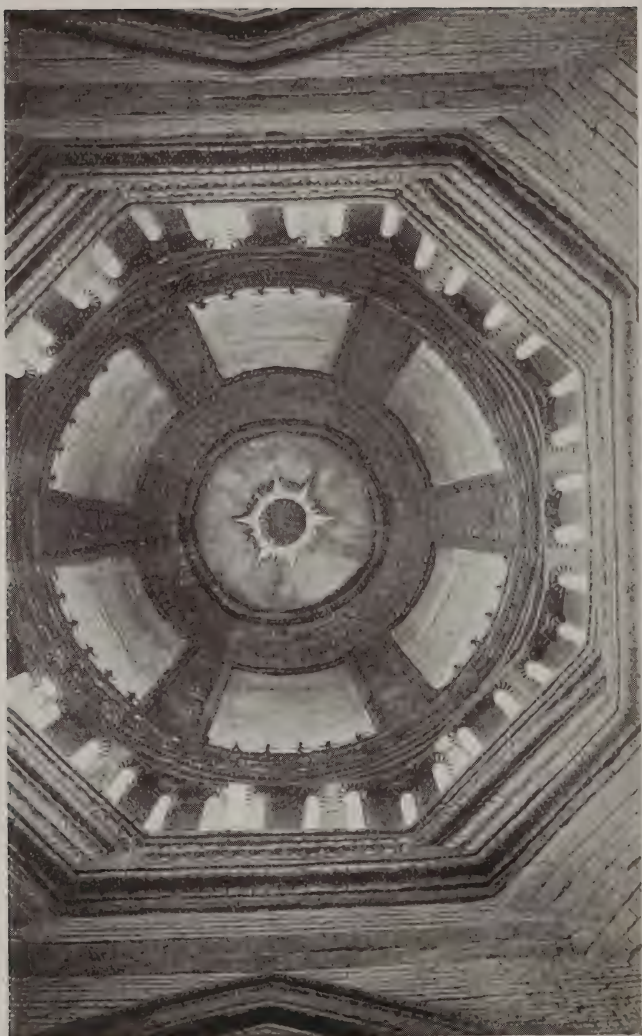
22 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

view to this that he made his nave pillars so massive, and still further strengthened them by flying buttresses thrown from the turrets built into the side walls across his narrow aisles on to the clerestory wall of his nave. When he became better acquainted with the character of the material he had to work with, he wisely departed from this intention, and planned a panelled barrel roof laid on the strong principals mentioned above. It was his intention, I believe, to make each panel of carved woodwork symbolical of some Scriptural truth or incident. This intention was never carried out, and it was left to his successor to complete the roof as it at present appears. Plate 15, taken from the "nun's walk," as well as the view down the nave behind the Communion table (Plate 14), shows the roof with the principals and panelling. These principals and panels—the work of Mr M'Ilwain and Mr Armitage—now mellowed into great beauty with age, are greatly admired.

On entering the building one passes under a shallow porch of four brick "fluted" pillars supporting a very small gallery under the western windows (Plate 16). This gallery Scott intended for a small organ, but it is manifestly inadequate for such a purpose. The front of the gallery and the frieze running between the tops of the pillars is of wood, and is ornamented by a series of the designs carved by one of the native carpenters. The series was never completed, but the parts already done give evidence of some wonderful symbolic work. It is not every artist who dare attempt to represent



16. SIDE VIEW OF PORCH, SHOWING TWO PILLARS ONLY, AND CARVING DONE BY NATIVE CARPENTERS.



17. THE INTERIOR OF THE DOME, TAKEN FROM BELOW.

on wood the vision of Ezekiel, but there it is, plainly cut by the chisel of the native carver following the pencilled outline of Scott's drawing. No flight of fancy was too lofty for Scott's mind not to soar after it. The porch with the frieze is seen in Plate 16, which is taken from the north side of the central aisle. To the left there is a narrow doorway with a Moorish arch leading into the bell-tower staircase already mentioned.

On entering the western doorway under the porch above mentioned one is at once struck by the vista of the Byzantine arcade formed by the arches between the nave pillars and the large transept arches on either side. These pillar arches are rounded and rise off the capitals of the nave, while the pillars themselves are continued up the clere-story walls to meet the wooden corbels from which the principals of the roof rise. The capitals of the pillars are plain ogee mouldings on a simple bead course running round the whole pillar. The base of each pillar is squared with a simple bead running round it corresponding with the bead at the top of the capital.

Looking along the whole length of the Church from the western door (Plate 13) one feels that the vista of aisle transepts and chancel would have been greatly enhanced had the floor of the chancel been raised by a few more steps, and still more had the apse been made the full width of the chancel instead of being narrowed to half. But in this case the architect would have had to sacrifice his half dome of the apse, as undoubtedly his system of groining

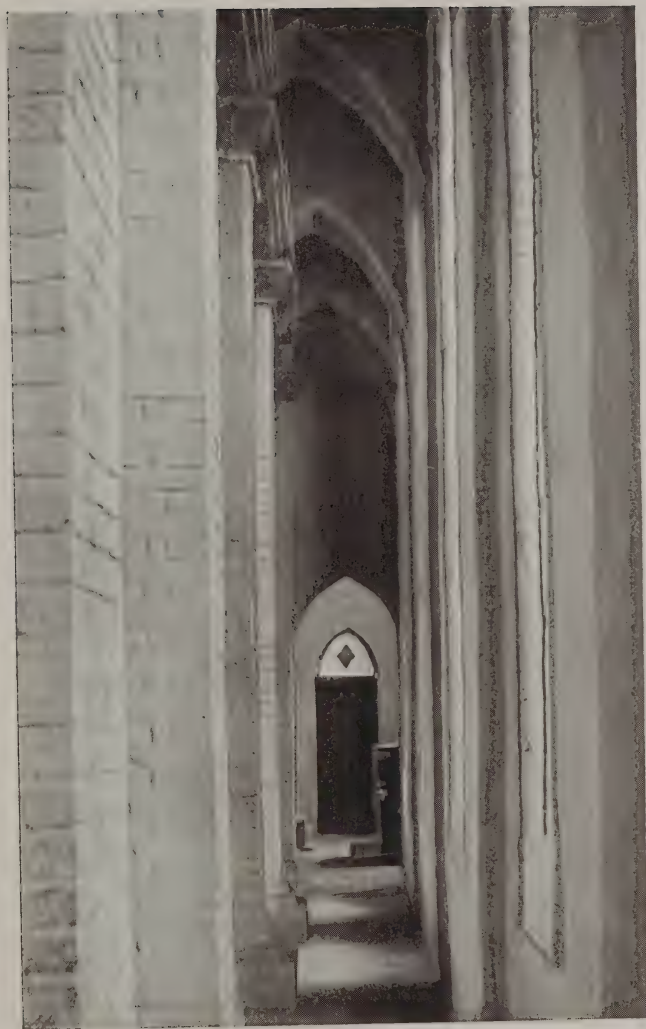
24 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

by octagonal tapering bullet-headed bricks would not have borne the strain of so wide an arch.

Standing beside the south-west pillar of the main arch and looking across to the other transept and upwards towards the interior of the dome, the view is one of the most striking on the whole building, and shows some of the most difficult problems which the architect had to solve. The working of the square central space between the main arches into the octagon above cost him many an anxious thought. The result will best be understood from the illustration (Plate 3). The panelling of the interior of the dome is seen in Plate 17, taken from below. The colouring of the panels was meant to represent the sky.

Plate 18 illustrates the narrowness of the side aisles of the nave—not more than three feet between the pillars and the wall. This gives a very cramped appearance to this part of the structure. A foot or two of extra width would not have thrown any extra strain on the flying buttresses which he threw over his aisle, and would have added immensely to the speciousness of the building. But when the foundations were laid he had visions of a groined roof in brick, and so thought more of strength than of space.

As left by Scott when he retired in 1897, the structure was completed only so far as its exterior was concerned. The interior was still in much the same condition as it was when it was hurriedly completed to admit of its being dedicated in 1891. The pillars and main walls were plastered over, and



18. ONE OF THE NARROW SIDE AISLES.



19. THE ORGAN IN THE NORTH TRANSEPT.

coloured—the former in dark green, the latter in red. At intervals since that date various efforts were made for its completion.

The roof has already been alluded to. The plaster was removed from the pillars, and the original brick-work uncovered. The mouldings of the main arches were done in varying shades of brick-colour, so as to emphasise their richness and depth. The same process was carried out in the various string courses and mouldings of the interior of the octagon and the dome.

In 1907 an organ was installed in the north transept (Plate 19). It is strange that Scott with his musical inclinations did not make provision for a larger instrument than could be accommodated on the narrow porch just inside the main door. The north transept was the only possible site, and even it could only be utilised for this purpose at the cost of interfering with the lower division of the central light of the triple window, in that transept.

In 1912 electric light was installed.

Much has been done to enrich the interior in gifts and memorials.

The seven light windows in the apse form the memorial to Dr John Bowie, for three years doctor to the Mission and to the European community. He died in the beginning of 1891 of an attack of diphtheria contracted as the result of an effort to save the life of the baby child of his sister, Mrs Henderson, by sucking the tube after an operation of tracheotomy. He was a physician greatly beloved by both white and black, who together gifted this

26 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

memorial of one whom all recognised as a friend as well as physician. The three central lights represent the crucifixion—the figure on the Cross with the Magdalene kneeling beneath it, and on either side the Virgin and St John. On either side again our Lord as the Good Shepherd and the Good Physician; and on either side again St Peter and St Paul (Plate 13).

In the centre of the large south transept window is an inset of the Resurrection, in memory of Catherine Drummond Duncan, wife of Jonathan Duncan, who died in 1883. She was much lamented by the members of the small European community to whom she had endeared herself by many kindly deeds.

Two of the three lights of the north transept window are fitted, one with the Baptism of our Lord and the other with the Ascension. The former was erected by his Directors in memory of Louis Monteith Fotheringham, manager of the African Lakes Corporation, who died at Chinde on his way home in 1895. The latter was erected by the members of the Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce in memory of John Buchanan, pioneer planter and Acting Vice-Consul, who also died at Chinde on his way home in 1896, and of his brothers David and Robert, who died at Blantyre in 1892 and 1896 (Plate 20).

Of the five lancet windows in the western gable of the nave, the central light represents the Archangel Michael, and is in memory of Dr William Affleck Scott, Mission doctor in Blantyre, who died in 1896. The two lights on either side of the above represent



20. THE NORTH TRANSEPT WINDOW.



21. THE PULPIT: THE GIFT OF THE LATE MISS ELIZABETH PEARSON OF ST ANDREWS.

the angels Gabriel and Raphael, and were erected by the European community in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria (Plate 14).

The pulpit (Plate 21) was gifted by the late Miss Elizabeth Pearson of St Andrews and Strathblane. The prayer-desk (Plate 22) was made and gifted to the Church by the late Dr Patrick M. Playfair, minister of St Andrews, at that time minister of Glencairn. The font (Plate 22) was the gift of St Andrew's Church, North Berwick. On the Communion table stands a small book-rest made from the tree in the Ilala country under which was buried the heart of David Livingstone (Plate 23). The wood was gifted by the late Robert Codrington, first Administrator under the British South Africa Company. A small brass plate is fixed to the desk giving the name of the donor as well as the origin of the piece of wood from which the desk is made.

On the walls of the chancel and on several of the pillars in the aisles there are brasses erected to the memory of members of the staff—Robert Cleland, Henry Henderson, William Affleck Scott, and Janet Beck. A bronze tablet laid in marble on the north chancel wall commemorates the Centenary of the birth of David Livingstone. It was gifted by his grandchildren, and was unveiled on the day of the Centenary Commemorative Service—13th March 1913.

On the eastmost pillar of the nave—and over the seat which he occupied in Church—when not taking part in the service—is a brass erected in memory

28 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

of the architect and builder of the Church and bearing an inscription to that effect. To those who remember the idealism with which he looked at all his work, the text appended seems singularly appropriate, "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual House" (1 Peter ii. 4).

On the opposite pillar is a brass to the memory of Dr John M'Rae, minister at Hawick, who took a leading part in the movement which led to the starting of the Mission in 1874.

On one of the buttresses of the south-western tower is a small brass plate which commemorates the fixing of the longitude of Blantyre in 1885 by Lieut. H. E. O'Neill by means of a series of 365 sets of lunar observations. The result made the longitude of Blantyre to be 2 hrs. 20 min. 13.56 sec. E. of Greenwich. This result has not required correction and has been made the starting-point for the geographical survey of the whole of the Protectorate and the surrounding country.

IV. DEDICATION

From Life and Work in Nyasaland, June 1891

"The ceremony took place on Sunday, 10th May, at morning service, and the Consecration was expressed both in English and in the native tongue. The Rev. A. Hetherwick, M.A., the Rev. W. A. Scott, M.B., C.M., took part in the service. The Europeans resident in the district were mostly present, and others temporarily resident, among the latter of whom were Mr Joseph Thomson and Mr Crawshay.

The offertory during the service was taken for Church furnishings.

“ The day was fine, and many native chiefs, all in fact who could get invitations, were present. The various headmen of note in the villages round about, and those on the various Europeans’ estates, were also there, and the whole area of the Church was full.

“ After Consecration Service, the various portions of Church furniture, the prayer-desk, the lectern, the pulpit, the font, and the Communion table were set apart by prayer, both in Nyanja and English. The sermon was in Nyanja and was attentively listened to by the large crowd present. Mr Hetherwick and Dr Scott read the lessons, and the native Christians in the choir aided in the singing of the *Te Deum* and *Gloria*.

“ In the evening of the same day Mr Hetherwick conducted service, and preached an effective sermon from the text, ‘The house I build for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and glory in all lands.’

“ During the week that followed, the chiefs and headmen, and those who had aided in the building of the Church from the first, were invited to a feast in the semi-circle of the School. Here tea and buns had been prepared for a hundred guests, and three oxen, of which one, to the sorrow of many, was Chimimba, our tamest, oldest ox, furnished meat for distribution and home remembrance of both the opening service in the Church and the social gathering in the School. Both gatherings were so connected as to be one in the minds of all present, and

30 BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND

their homes were claimed by the slaying of the oxen for the eating of their evening meal.

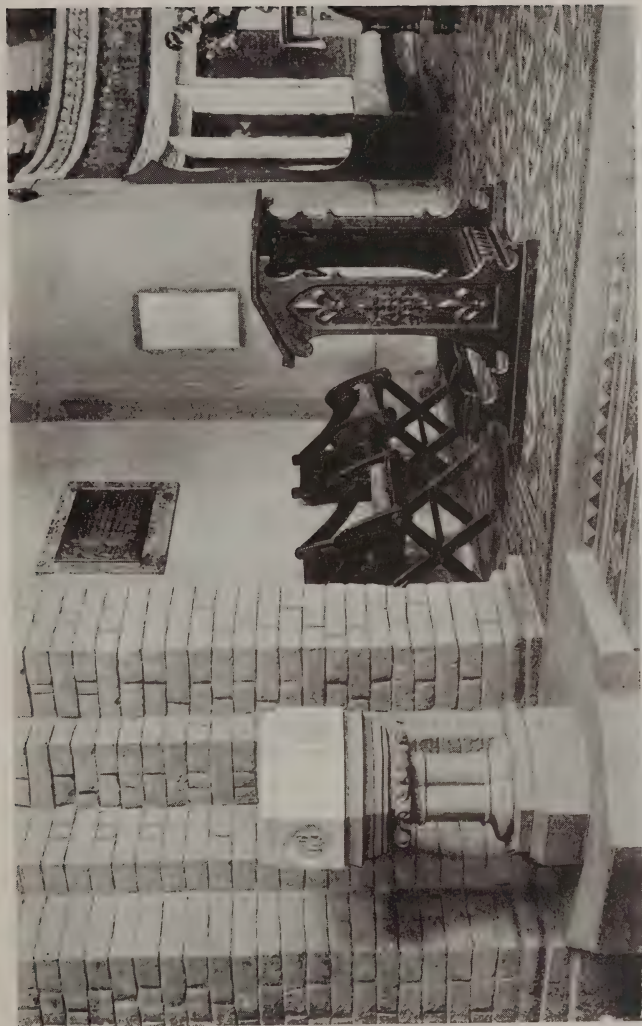
“ The Sunday following, namely Whitsunday, was celebrated by the first Communion Service in the native tongue ever held here. There were present about thirty native communicants, and these together with the Europeans who joined in the service felt that a new impulse had been given to the Missionary work of this land. Three of the Catechumens were admitted to communion—Mwepeta, the first man from the outside villages, and Theodora and Martha, our two oldest manse girls.”

ADDENDUM

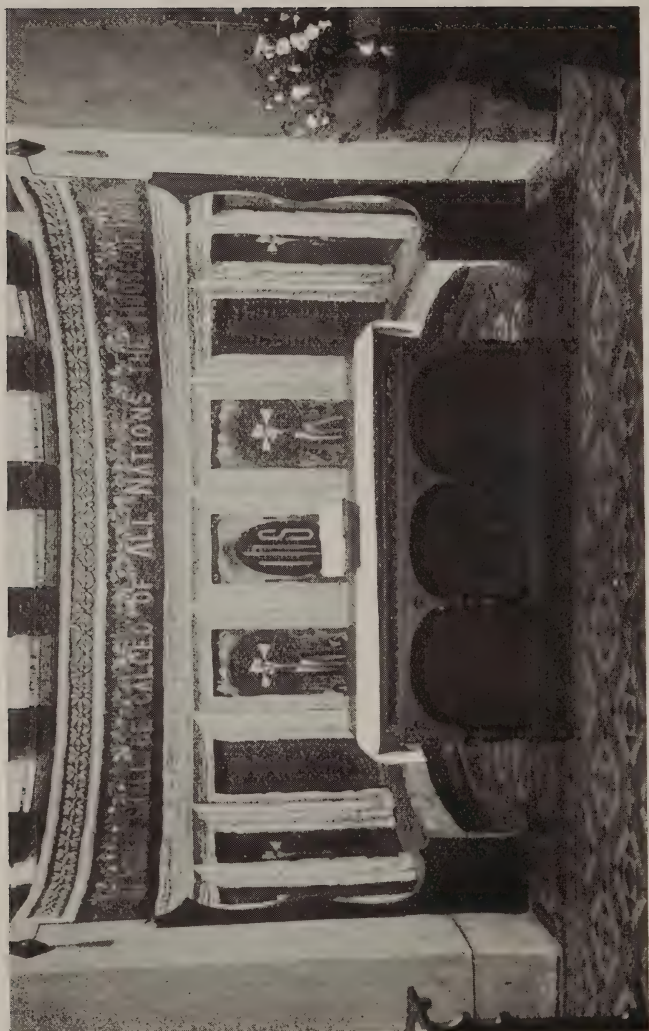
All the while this building was rising, demanding care and thought, Scott was at the same time working at his monumental task, “ The Encyclopædic Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language.” This had been begun soon after his arrival in the country in 1881, but it was not completed till 1889. In the Mission Diary under the date 27th July of that year there is the following entry :

“ Dictionary finished after seven years' hard work at it—the last six months being very hard work indeed. May it be useful by God's blessing. This along with Church work, Church plans, and the work of the whole Mission has been a considerable strain.”

And here is what he writes in the same chronicle of the completion of his other great task :



22. THE PRAYER DESK: THE GIFT OF THE LATE REV. DR P. M. PLAYFAIR OF ST ANDREWS.
THE FONT: THE GIFT OF ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, NORTH BERWICK.



23. THE APSE AND COMMUNION TABLE.

BLANTYRE CHURCH, NYASALAND 31

" May 10th, 1891. The Church opened. Large concourse—filled, and perhaps two hundred outside. Hetherwick, Willie (his brother), and present Thomson (the traveller, who was in the neighbourhood at the time), Moirs (John and Fred), Crawshay, Stevenson, David Buchanan, Lindsay, Whicker, Mandala men—Gibbs, etc. Day cold, windy."

